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Park's First Day Of Testimony Is Termed 'Boring'

By T. R. Reid

Washington Post Staff Writer

The House committee investigating the Korean influence-buying scandal finally got to question its star witness, Tongsun Park, yesterday, and several committee members offered the same description of the secret session: "boring."

Members of the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct said their special counsel, Leon Jaworski, devoted the five-hour hearing to a methodical and sometimes tedious review of Park's background in South Korea and the businesses he operated in the United States after coming here in the early 1960s.

With nine more days of Park's testimony yet to go, the committee members said, Jaworski seemed in no hurry to get to specific questions about allegations that Park offered bribes and favors to U.S. officials to win their support for the South Korean government.

"It was boring," said Rep. Millicent H. Fenwick (R-N.J.). "A lot of it went awfully slowly."

"Don't even bother to ask," quipped Rep. Richardson Preyer (D-N.C.) to a reporter who approached him after the closed hearing. "There's nothing worth leaking yet."

Committee Chairman John J. Flynt Jr. (D-Ga.) said he didn't agree with colleagues who found the session boring, because "Mr. Park is a very interesting man." But Flynt added that the questioning produced no information that has not already been revealed in

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newspapers or by federal investigators pursuing the Korean case.

Since it began its investigation a year ago, the committee has been trying to cajole or threaten Park into answering its questions. Park returned from Seoul to appear before the committee only after extended negotiations in which he won immunity from prosecution on bribery and conspiracy charges in return for truthful testimony.

Thus there was considerable hoopla in the Rayburn House Office Building yesterday when Park arrived at 9:35 a.m. for his first session before the committee.

Before entering the committee room, the Korean stepped onto a platform before a crowded phalanx of reporters and television cameras to promise his cooperation with the investigators.

"I'm going to get in there and let them ask any questions . . . and I'll do my best to clear the air so the Congress of this country can get back to its normal life," he said with a grin.

Park, whose jaunty charm won him friendships with several members of Congress, looked fatigued yesterday. He told reporters he was "plainly tired" from the continued questioning about the Korean influence-buying effort.

In Seoul last month, Park was interrogated by Justice Department pro-

bers seeking evidence of criminal misconduct in the Korean affair. After his 10 days before the House committee, he is scheduled to face questions in a separate Senate investigation of the Korean case, and then to testify in the criminal trial of former Rep. Richard Hanna (D-Calif.), who has been charged with bribery and conspiracy in the case.

Rep. Bruce Caputo (R-N.Y.), a committee member who sat in on Park's interrogation last month, said that Jaworski's questioning yesterday was tougher and "more adversary" than that of the Justice Department officials who questioned Park in Seoul.

"In most cases where Park was evasive," Caputo said, "Jaworski or one of his staff aides would direct him to get back on point."

"Where he was incomplete, Mr. Jaworski would bring up some documentary evidence to challenge his answer. That didn't happen as much in the Justice Department's interrogation."

Caputo said the relatively tedious questioning yesterday was necessary to lay a basis for specific questions. He said the committee "may get down to brass tacks on specific cases" today.

Jaworski would say only that the first day's questioning "went according to plan."

Park was put under oath at the start of the session, but no lie detector was used during the questioning. Committee members expressed varying degrees of trust in what he said.

Tongsun Park, in Seoul Testimony, Linked K.C.I.A. Tie to Private Gain

By NICHOLAS M. HORROCK

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 28—Tongsun Park testified under oath in Seoul that his only reason for cultivating the friendship of three consecutive directors of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency was to fend off his business enemies and keep a lucrative rice agent's assignment, according to transcripts of his testimony.

Whether Mr. Park made payments to present and former members of Congress as a private businessman or as a secret agent of the Republic of South Korea is expected to be a key point of inquiry as the interrogation of the former rice dealer continues before the House ethics committee.

The committee, formally called the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, began questioning Mr. Park today in a closely guarded hearing room in the Sam Rayburn Building here, a few hundred feet from the offices of Congressmen he once called his friends.

The scope of the case will be much broader if House investigators are successful in establishing that Mr. Park was a secret agent of the Korean Government, and not merely a private businessman attempting to get favored treatment.

From the beginning of the inquiry, the possibility that foreign agents might have been able to manipulate American legislation, foreign policy or even war powers has caused deep concern in Congress. Recent campaign finance reform, for instance, forbids a member of Congress to accept campaign contributions from foreign individuals or governments.

In 17 days of interrogation by Department of Justice officials last month, Mr. Park steadfastly maintained that his actions were those of a private businessman. The transcripts of that questioning are part of more than 2,100 pages of material made available to the Senate and House ethics committees to conduct their inquiry.

A review of portions of the transcripts indicated that Mr. Park made these points:

¶He obtained and kept his rice agent's assignment with the aid of three directors of the K.C.I.A. He once asked one of them to place \$2 million to \$3 million in a bank as security for a loan, but denied knowing that the money might have come from Korean Government funds. He acknowledged that he had received orders from K.C.I.A. officials, including a document code-named "ice mountain," which was a list of Americans to attempt to influence.

¶He described in detail his relationship with former Representatives Otto E. Passman, Democrat of Louisiana; Richard T. Hanna, Democrat of California; Cornelius E. Gallagher, Democrat of New Jersey; William E. Minshall, Republican of Ohio, and Edwin W. Edwards, Democrat of Louisiana, and unraveled the secret codes and notations on payments from a ledger and diary seized by Government agents.

¶He ticked off campaign contributions to a longer list of political figures, ranging from the late Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, Democrat of Minnesota, to Representative John B. Breaux, Democrat of Louisiana, and described at length the

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